

## OPERATIONAL SUPPORT AIRLIFT (OSA)

The Marine Corps presently operates four different types of aircraft to fill its operational support airlift (OSA) requirements: the C-9 Skytrain, UC-12 King Air Orion, C-20G Gulfstream IV, and UC-35 Citation 560 Ultra and Encore. OSA aircraft provide air logistics support to our warfighters by moving high priority passengers and cargo between and within theaters of operation. OSA aircraft carry out short-notice, time-critical logistical air movements, relieving front-line tactical squadrons from this necessary, but non-tactical mission. By freeing our tactical aircraft assets from routine missions, OSA aircraft are an effective combat multiplier for the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF), joint force and regional combatant commanders. In peacetime, OSA aircraft are used to provide logistic support to ensure military effectiveness in support of national defense, essential training for operational personnel, and cost effective seasoning of pilots.

Below are recent examples (by type of aircraft) that illustrate Marine Corps OSA's relevance to the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT):

The C-9 provided airlift support to MAGTF-8, the lead element of a multinational interim force following the resignation of Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in February 2004 and transported Marine Corps forces and equipment to and from Southwest Asia.

The UC-12 was deployed to Kuwait and Iraq in support of I Marine Expeditionary Force during Operation Iraqi Freedom, where these aircraft delivered

key combat personnel and more than 70,000 pounds of critical cargo in support of the Marine forces and provided airlift support to MAGTF-8.

The C-20G (based at Marine Corps Air Station Kaneohe Bay, HI) was forward-deployed to Bahrain in support of U.S. Marine Forces Pacific and the warfighters in theater during the opening months of Operation Enduring Freedom. This aircraft continues to provide frequent global airlift for GWOT support.

The UC-35 transported critically needed Combat Air Patrol (CAP) pilots throughout the United States to their respective bases immediately following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. During this period, civilian aircraft were precluded from flying in the continental United States and military transport aircraft were utilized for efficient, expeditious transportation of key personnel. Marine Corps UC-35's are currently forward-deployed in Southwest Asia providing invaluable daily support to the regional combatant commander and relief to tactical aircraft by moving personnel and cargo throughout the theater.

In the continental United States, Marine Corps OSA is managed by U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) for scheduling. USTRANSCOM maintains and utilizes the Joint Operational Support Aircraft Center to maximize use of all available continental United States OSA assets, regardless of service. They additionally support the MAGTF at combined exercises, such as Desert Talon. The incorporation of OSA into MAGTF exercises

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relieves participating tactical squadrons from much of the exercise-associated administrative logistical airlift requirements. This, in turn enables the tactical squadrons to focus more time and resources on combat-related flight training.

Acquisition of relatively low-cost, commercial off-the-shelf aircraft with minimal militarization provides MAGTF commanders swift, on-demand support. Current initiatives will ensure the availability of short-notice, time-critical, logistical air support using more capable aircraft fully integrated into Marine Corps operations.